2: Gamble S-5 (1926-1933)1954 AF12 North China AF12



Their wearers did not belong to the very old group, but were men between 46 and 55 years of age.

A surprisingly small number of persons with physical disabilities were reported in the 515 families. The total was 25. Only three of these were females. There were three blind men and three men and one woman were blind in one eye. Two men were dumb and six were deaf. Lameness was serious enough to be reported for four men and two women. Two men had paralyzed arms and two paralyzed fingers.

With less than one per cent of the group reported as having physical disabilities one cannot but wonder whether the report was incomplete or whether the extra difficulties of life had eliminated others who might have been stricken.

*Home Ownership*

Home ownership was almost universal for these Ting Hsien families. The figures are 98.8 per cent for the 5,255 families and 96.8 per cent for the 515 families. In a group of families living in Peking only 21.2 per cent owned their homes.[14]

About two-thirds of the non-owners were given the use of their homes, so house rent was paid by only 0.4 per cent of the 5,255 families and by 1.4 per cent of the 515 families. The small proportion of home renters makes it evident that a large proportion of those classed as tenant farmers owned their homes, even though they rented all of the land they farmed. In the 1st District 11.4 per cent of the families were tenant farmers, in the hsien only 4.7 per cent.

The high percentage of home ownership indicates very definitely that Ting Hsien had a steady, settled population and that almost all of the families had been in the area long enough to accumulate the funds needed to buy their homes. Quite a number of the families said that their ancestors came to Ting Hsien about 500 years ago.

In the 71 villages in the 1st District the average family residence area was 2.1 mu, about 100 x 150 feet. In that area the family would have its living quarters, housing for any animals, and storage for all farm equipment and for its food, fodder, and fertilizer.

The total residence area in the 71 villages varied from eight to 800 mu. Sixteen villages had less than 50 mu each. Fourteen had 300 or more mu. The average per family varied from 0.4 mu to 8.2 mu, but

14. Gamble, *op. cit.*

1/ [In Ting Hsien -- Analyst]

4: Burgess E-4, 5 (1926-1927) 1928 AF12 North China AF12



guild was to worship the master and to express thankfulness for his having handed down the technique (of carpentry). The members come to the guild meetings for the purpose of worship and religious observance."

The guildsman interviewed said that he saw signs of prosperity in his craft and that the membership was increasing: "The rent for houses is now high; therefore men are building new houses, and consequently there is more demand for carpenters. The wages also are increasing to keep pace with the rising cost of living." This general observation is in harmony with Mr. Gamble's study, *Prices, Wages, and the Standard of Living in Peking*. Because of the increasing cost of living the guild had changed the wages from a copper to a dollar basis, which meant a considerable increase.

Several years before the Boxer Uprising of 1900, certain missionaries in Tung Chow, fifteen miles east of Peking, had been training carpenters in the methods of constructing foreign houses. There has also been an increasing demand for homes for missionaries and for Christian school buildings, for business houses, stores and, more recently, hotels, government colleges and schools constructed in the Western style, as well as a general demand on the part of many wealthy Chinese for foreign-style houses. As a result a very considerable number of these guildsmen are now trained in the methods of constructing buildings in the Western style.

Not only has the technique of the carpenters changed, but the attempt to form the Lu Pan Industrial Union referred to above signifies an endeavor to meet new conditions.

### C. A Meeting of the Blind Guild

In order to give a vivid picture of a meeting of one of the most colorful guilds in Peking, there follows an account of a meeting held in the spring of 1919 given by an eyewitness,

4: Burgess E-4, 5 (1926-1927) 1928 AF12 North China AF12



Mr. S. D. Gamble. This meeting must not be taken as typical of guild meetings in the city of Peking. The organization and regulations of the Blind Guild are, according to our study, the most complicated and detailed of any guild in the city. The general outline, however, shows the character of the business transacted at one of these annual meetings. 417* 732

The Gild of the Blind, who make a business of singing, story telling and entertaining, holds its meetings on the 2nd of the 3rd month and the 8th of the 9th month, celebrating the Chinese festivals of the 3rd of the 3rd moon and the 9th of the 9th moon, as the meeting lasts until 5 o'clock the next morning. It was our good fortune to be given the privilege of attending one of these meetings. As the gild has no gild hall, it borrows the *Ching Chung Miao,* a temple in the South City, outside of Hatamen, and there, all day long, a constant stream of blind men was coming and going. They were greeting their friends, discussing politics and the conditions of business, and enjoying the tea and cakes that had been provided; and it was a strange sight to see so many blind people together, each with his long bamboo cane, tapping, tapping, tapping, as they moved around the hall. They were constantly calling back and forth across the hall as the men tried to locate their friends; and, when a group wanted to move from one part of the hall to another, they formed a line, each with his hand on the shoulder of the man in front of him, and were led by a man who still had a little vision and so could avoid chairs and tables. A very few women came to the meeting; they visited among themselves or listened to the business being transacted, but did not mingle with the men. [533 538]

In the evening the executive council of forty-eight met to conduct the business of the gild. They gathered around a row of tables arranged in the shape of a tortoise shell. The twenty-four men on each side of the table all had different titles and duties as follows.

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| Manager | Witness |
| President | Adviser |
| Vice-President | Inspector |
| Judge | Investigator |
| Attorney-General | Reporter |
| Prosecuting Attorney | Chief of Police |
| Grand Jury | Police |
| Jury of the Court | Executioner |
| Sheriff | Warrant Carrier |
| Counselor | Time-keeper |
| Protector | Door-keeper |
| Law Proctor | Servant of the Court |

The office held by the different members of the executive committee[1] depended either upon lot or the choice of the general manager, for one of the men who came to sit with the foreign guests complained that he had been appointed executioner and did not like the job.

The worship of the gods of the gild was the first business of the meeting. On the raised platform at the upper end of the hall an altar had been arranged for the God of Heaven, the God of Earth, and the God of Men, from whom the gild gets its name of the "Three Emperors Associations." On the wall were hung the pictures of the three gods, the Emperor of Heaven being in the middle and slightly higher than the other two. In front of them, on a table, was spread a feast of chicken, pork, fish, wine, vegetables, fruit and rice. On the edge of the table burned two large candles and the incense offered to the gods. The members of the executive committee came up two by two, to offer to the gods their obeisance and thanks for the prosperity of the past year. They were directed in their worship by the secretary of the gild, the one officer who was not blind. First, they were required to straighten their clothing, then they bowed before the gods, and then went down on their knees and bowed their head to the floor in the "K'e t' ou," the Chinese sign of submission and reverence. The bow and the "K'e t' ou" were repeated three

[1] [Guild of the blind -- Analyst]

4: Burgess E-4, 5 (1926-1927) 1928 AF12 North China AF12



times, and then the next pair was brought up. All the time the worship was going on, music was furnished by six of the best musicians of the gild.

After all forty-eight of the officers had worshiped before the gods, the musicians gave a two-hour concert with their best songs and music. Any who had written new songs during the past year were called upon to give them at the time. Following the concert, the business meeting was held from 12 to 2. It consisted of reports and the discussion of methods for strengthening the gild, and of ways and means for making the business of the blind entertainers more prosperous. At the end of the meeting, a report giving a statement of the condition of the gild, a résumé of the business of the past year, and the names of all the officers, musicians, committeemen and subscribers, was burned on the altar, so that the gods might have a complete report of the work and development of the gild.

After the business meeting, the committee constituted itself a court, tried the cases of those who were accused of having broken the rules and regulations of the gild, and heard and attempted to settle cases where there had been a quarrel or dispute between any of the members. When the cases were brought before the court testimony was taken and a verdict rendered. Each of the members of the executive committee carried out the duties of the office to which he had been assigned.

In the olden days, the gilds used to punish their younger members, when convicted of violating the important rules of the association, by sentencing them to 50, 70 or 100 strokes of the bamboo, according to the degree of their guilt. As the gild felt that no man could completely break a rule, the entire sentence was never carried out. If a man were sentenced to 100 blows, the executioner would give only 90. The older members were punished by a fine. Those convicted of a first degree offense were fined one tael ($1.39). For a second degree offense, the fine was seven mace (7/10 of a tael [$.97]) and for one of the third degree, three mace (3/10 of a tael [$.42]).

After the establishment of the Republic, the people denied the gild the right to use the bamboo and insisted that other punish-

4: Burgess E-4, 5 (1926-1927) 1928 AF12 North China AF12



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ments be used. As a result, the gild has found it hard to enforce its rules, and but few trials have been held during the last few years. The gild officers, however, are planning to suspend for a certain number of days those who break the rules of the gilds. Suspension will mean that the guilty one will be prevented from carrying on his business during those days, and it is hoped that in this way the members can once more be made to live up to the rules.

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Following the trials, a feast was served to the committee and visitors who were still present; and then, after the burning of another paper before the gods, the meeting broke up about 5 a. m.[1]

[1] Gamble and Burgess, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-174.